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ABSTRACT

The Council for Curriculum and Learning was appointed to develop a plan for implementing the promises of the New Compact for Learning of New York State. This document considers the roles of the Council and state and local districts in working toward New Compact ideas. The New Compact requires a new vision of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that will help schools focus on the development of a greater range of student talents at a higher level of performance for all. The state will develop curriculum frameworks. Learning goals are to be monitored through state program assessments and local student assessments. A unitary Regents' diploma system, supported by a Regents' portfolio, will be developed. Working in consort, the state and local authorities will promote equal access to education and educational equity for all students. The Council will provide advice regarding outcome standards, curriculum frameworks, assessment, staff development, and program implementation. Council recommendations will be implemented in congruence with other parts of the New Compact. Three appendixes contain assessment principles, a description of curriculum and assessment committees, and the Regents' goals for education. (SLD)

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BUILDING A LEARNING-CENTERED CURRICULUM FOR LEARNER-CENTERED SCHOOLS

Interim Report of the
New York State Curriculum and Assessment Council
to the Commissioner and the Regents

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October, 1992

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Nathan Quinones, Educational Consultant

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Lois Barry, NYS Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc.
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Robert Tobias, New York City Board of Education
Adam Urbanski, Rochester Teachers Association
Saul M. Yanofsky, White Plains Public Schools
Edmund Gordon, Professor Emeritus, Yale University (consultant to the Council)

PREFACE

In 1991, the New York Board of Regents approved *A New Compact for Learning*, which provided the rationale for educational transformation in the State of New York:

> We need a New Compact for Learning—one which focuses on results, which promotes local initiative, and which empowers people at all levels of the system... to narrow the gap between the educational haves and have nots, and to raise the entire enterprise to a new plane of excellence.
>
> Our educational system today is meeting neither our aspirations nor our needs. Too many are left without the skills and knowledge to function effectively in a sophisticated society. Even many of our best students do not measure up to their potential—or to the academic achievements of the young people of competing nations.
>
> The problem is simply stated: the legions of dedicated people who work in our schools are caught up in a system that is obsolete. Either we make fundamental changes in that system, or we begin the slide into a darker and less prosperous time.
>
> Yet the changes we need cannot be made by the school system alone. What is required is a common effort by all members of our society to change the way we raise and educate our children.
>
> The New Compact is based on six key principles:
>
> 1. All children can learn;
> 2. Schools must focus on results;
> 3. Schools must aim for mastery for all students;
> 4. Schools must be provided with the means to achieve the results;
> 5. Schools must be provided authority with accountability;
> 6. Success must be rewarded and failure must be remedied.

This Council for Curriculum and Assessment was appointed to develop a plan for implementing many of the New Compact's promises. The Council is charged with advising the Commissioner and the Regents concerning the design of a program of desired learning outcomes, standards, and new forms of assessment that (a) are consistent with the Regents Goals, (b) develop higher order cognitive skills and understanding throughout and across the curriculum, and (c) achieve a balance between breadth and depth of curriculum outcomes.

The Council is working in collaboration with seven Curriculum Committees engaged in developing statements of learning outcomes within and across disciplines and proposing recommendations for assessment strategies. The Council is also charged with assessing the quality and appropriateness of these Committees' recommendations, evaluating the efficacy of implementation plans and practices, and developing a program for informing the educational community and the public about these changes. Finally, the Council and Committees are to consider how staff development and State and local programs should be developed to support and assist teachers in preparing students to achieve the desired learning Outcomes and statewide learning goals.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Curriculum and Assessment Council was appointed to make recommendations to the Commissioner and the Board of Regents on how to make many of the promises of New York's New Compact a reality. The Council is to provide advice regarding:

1) student outcome standards;
2) curriculum frameworks that can support these outcomes, including statements of learning outcomes within and across disciplines;
3) assessment strategies;
4) staff development; and
5) implementation plans and practices.

The Council's Recommendations

The New Compact requires a new vision of curriculum, instruction, and assessment—one that helps schools focus on the development of a greater range of student talents at higher levels of performance for all. In order to accomplish the Compact's goals, curriculum, instruction, and assessment must be designed to encourage active learning, emphasizing in-depth understanding along with applications of knowledge in new and complex situations, rather than rote responses. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment must contribute to the development of students' abilities to use their minds well; to think critically and creatively; to make informed and reasoned judgments; to produce and invent as well as to critique and analyze; and to develop habits of personal responsibility and concern for others.

Curriculum, instruction, and assessment must also be interrelated and interconnected. What is taught, how it is taught, and how the success of that teaching is interpreted must all be part of a continuous process, with learning integrated within and across disciplines and between school and non-school performance settings. Assessment must be embedded in the teaching and learning process, rather than "delivered" out of context at discrete testing moments throughout a student's career. It should provide information about student potentials as well as progress, and be motivating to students, teachers, and schools as it illuminates compelling goals along with means for reaching them.

Student Learning Outcomes and Standards

The State will be issuing broad statements of learning outcomes, describing what students should know, understand, and be able to do at graduation and at certain developmental points during their school careers. Local districts and schools will establish their own educational outcomes that are consistent with and extend beyond State goals.

Student outcome standards should:

- express the core concepts and essential performance abilities found within and across all subject areas;
- apply to all students;
- be developed for broad educational levels (e.g. elementary, middle and secondary education) rather than separate grade levels, so as to allow for flexibility in meeting students' needs;
- lead to a unitary Regents diploma based on demonstrated performance, recognizing levels of distinction (e.g. proficient, highly proficient, distinguished).
- indicate areas and levels of proficiency as measures of progress toward the desired outcomes, not as control gates that deny students access to further learning opportunities.

Curriculum Frameworks

The State will, with wide consultation, develop curriculum frameworks that reflect the desired learning outcomes for students, providing guidance but not straitjackets for local curriculum development. The frameworks should enable schools to meet the statewide goals and learning outcomes, while encouraging necessary innovation and flexibility in school organization and instruction, including many different configurations of courses, classes, and instructional arrangements. The curriculum frameworks should:

- develop a coherent vision of important learning outcomes to be sought over the course of students' schooling across as well as within each disciplinary area;

- support the development of students' abilities to demonstrate in-depth understanding of core concepts, to think and reason, to use a wide range of communication and information management skills, and to generate and apply knowledge in real-life situations;

- foster instruction that nurtures students' imagination, creative vision, and aesthetic appreciation, along with their appreciation for personal, civic, social, and intellectual values, and for the diversity of human experience;

- encourage teachers to use a range of teaching strategies that recognize diverse ways of learning and performance and allow for many different kinds of evidence about what students have learned;

- encourage schools to use other learning settings, including libraries, museums, businesses, and community organizations, and to teach in interdisciplinary ways.

Assessment of Student Learning

The State's learning goals are to be monitored through a system of State program assessments and local student assessments. The State component will focus on program evaluation, allowing policymakers to gauge progress toward desired learning outcomes in ways that can direct investments and interventions where they are needed. The local component will focus on individual student assessment, allowing teachers to gauge student growth, progress, strengths, and skills in ways that are useful to instruction.

Between its State and local components, the assessment system will provide a view of students' work and learning that is cumulative, multifaceted, and authentic: it will evaluate students' abilities to tackle complex tasks requiring integrated knowledge and application of skills over time and in a variety of contexts.

The **unitary Regents diploma system** will enable all students to work toward a **Regents diploma**, documenting their learning in a Regents Portfolio that incorporates performance tasks, projects, and performance-based examinations. Levels of distinction would be awarded for particular subject areas and overall performance.

Assessments of student performance should:

- be as authentic as possible, representing real-world tasks and situations requiring "higher order" thinking and complex, integrated performances;

- provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate their skill, knowledge, and understanding, including written and oral examinations, performance tasks, projects, portfolios, and structured observations by teachers;

- enable teachers to assess student growth in a cumulative, longitudinal fashion using many kinds of evidence;

- be measures of actual performance which can be easily expressed, used, and understood by students, parents, teachers, counselors, and the public;

- communicate expectations and support student motivation, self assessment, and continual growth;

- use criteria that are public, open, and clearly articulated so that they can guide teaching and learning;

- inform instruction and encourage reflective practice;

- be valid and accurate for identifying students' strengths, abilities, and progress, opening up possibilities for encouraging further growth rather than precluding access to future, advanced instruction.

A major goal is to develop an integrated, coherent system of assessment that serves multiple purposes appropriately and well, without unecessary cost and duplication, and in ways that are supportive of the learning outcomes desired for all students.

State and Local Roles in a System of Shared Accountability

To ensure that students receive the learning opportunities to which they are entitled, a system of shared accountability must be built on a sturdy tripod of responsibilities for outcome standards, resource standards, and professional standards of practice. The assessment of desired learning outcomes must be accompanied by commitments to ensure adequate and equitable opportunities for students within and across districts, and by supports to ensure that schools and teachers are able to use appropriate teaching practices. In each area, the State, school districts, and schools must assume their different appropriate roles.

The State's responsibility includes:

- conducting statewide assessments for program evaluation purposes that use state-of the-art performance assessments on a sampling basis to evaluate what students know and are able to do;

- reporting aggregate student performance results in ways that describe specific tasks students can perform in clear, understandable terms;

- reporting on school practices, programs, staffing, and other aspects of students' learning opportunites along with statewide progress toward educational equity;

- supporting the development of local schools' assessment programs by providing access to resources such as a bank of assessment prototypes, portfolio ideas, performance tasks, and other instruments;

- supporting an Assessment Quality Assurance Panel, as a deliberative body charged with evaluating and approving local assessment systems;

- developing the Regents Portfolio Standards for graduation by exhibition;

- creating a school quality review process, in which teams of local practitioners and State department staff visit schools to help them examine how their teaching and learning processes prepare students for success;

- supporting improvements in practice by:

  1) providing a rich array of curriculum materials;

  2) recognizing successful schools, documenting their work, and relieving them from unnecessary regulation;

  3) supporting school networks for disseminating promising practices;

  4) remedying the problems of schools that are failing, with a diagnostic process of intervention and support;

  5) supporting staff development opportunities;

  6) supporting compatible reforms in teacher and administrator preparation programs.

Local school and district responsibilities include:

- developing local statements of learning outcomes, performance standards, and curriculum strategies to enact and extend the State's goals;

- developing a local assessment system for providing information about individual students—one that is compatible with State and local goals and uses a range of assessment strategies, including portfolios of student work, observations of students, and performance tasks—to be approved by the Assessment Quality Assurance Panel;

- developing the form and content of assessments to meet the Regents Portfolio Standards;

- creating regular occasions and means for sharing information and eliciting feedback about school programs and students' experiences from community members.

Implementation

The implementation of the Council's recommendations should be managed in congruence with the other parts of the New Compact. Implementation should include:

- a long-range plan with incremental steps toward full implementation;
- integration of the school review process with the new curriculum and assessment reforms;
- a vigorous program of public information and involvement;
- a major initiative to support and disseminate promising practices across the State;
- a major initiative, using current understandings about teaching, learning, and organizational development, to strengthen staff development and technical assistance;
- carefully developed legislation to implement the plan;
- a budgetary commitment to the supports needed for success; and
- ongoing evaluation of each component of this new system, to promote reflective policymaking and continual evolution of the State's efforts to achieve learner-centered education.

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INTRODUCTION

As New York's *A New Compact for Learning* makes clear, our educational enterprise must be transformed to meet the demands of the 21st Century and the aspirations of our children, their parents, and educators and citizens across the State. If students are to be prepared to live in the global village of the future, schooling must be reconceptualized and recast to reflect that future. Schools must prepare students to function in a world that will be information rich, technologically complex, incredibly diverse, and rapidly changing. We have only just begun to imagine these schools clearly. As a society and as educators and parents, we have begun to plan together and think more clearly about the students and graduates we want, and the more capable and productive citizens we need—not just what some lucky few, but virtually all of them, need to become.

The schools we envision are exciting places: thoughtful, reflective, engaging, and engaged. They include people of all ages who discuss, share, reason together, synthesize, discover, and create. They are places where meaning is made—constructed, negotiated, critiqued, applied, evaluated, and remade. They are places that resemble workshops, studios, galleries, theaters, studies, laboratories, parliaments, field research sites, and newsrooms. They feature moments of difficult and creative tasks, and responsive interchange. Their spirit is one of shared inquiry.

The students in these schools feel supported in taking risks and thinking independently; they are also engaged in initiating and assessing their ideas and products, developing a disciplined respect for their own work and the work of others. They take pride in tackling and following through on tasks that are hard and sometimes tiring, but always meaningful. They cover less on a superficial level, but learn deeply about much more, especially about things that are profoundly important to them and their lives. They demonstrate what they know and can do by making things, examining things, conducting research, writing about what they have discovered, and by displaying their data, products, and performances in graphs, charts, models, videotapes, computer programs, essays, and a variety of other forms. They are animated by a sense of their own accomplishment and the vast intrigues of worlds waiting to be touched, explored, and conquered.

Their teachers function more like coaches, mentors, wise advisors, and guides than as information transmitters or gatekeepers. They offer high standards with high levels of support, combining patience and faith with knowledge and skills for creating a bridge between challenging curriculum goals and students' unique needs, talents, and learning styles. They use a wide array of richly informative assessment strategies to understand their students and how they learn. These are interwoven with many different strategies for facilitating students' exploration, learning, and performance that draw on the diverse intelligences students possess. They are continually learning because they teach in schools where everyone would be glad to be a student, or a teacher—where everyone would want to be—and could be—both.

Central to the creation of these schools is the reexamination and redesign of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. We have approached this task in the context of New York's Regents' Goals and the New Compact for Learning. Our recommendations draw upon and stand in close resonance with both documents, which proved to be useful and inspiring guides.

We read these documents for the implicit principles they entail as well as the details they codify. We found particularly valuable the insistence, in the Regents' Goals and the New Compact based on them, that schools must set—and actually embody—high goals for all students. This consistent theme—that higher order learning, high level knowledge and skills, and high expectations must be pursued for all students—pervades both the Regents' Goals and the Compact established to implement them.

We are keenly aware that in today's unpredictable labor market, it is important to educate in such a way that students can deal with novel questions and problems and can successfully encounter new situations. We are also aware that, as citizens,

students must be able to look at situations with empathy, understanding others' points of view, as well as being able to evaluate what is lacking, where the sources of problems lie, so that they may be collectively solved in the public sphere.

The Regents' Goals (included in Appendix C) articulate the essential core components in clear and useful terms. In addition to knowledge, skills, and values within and across disciplines, the Goals emphasize throughout that all students must "develop a capacity for self-directed learning." This one central requirement recognizes the core of learning which empowers all students and vouchsafes their freedom of thought and autonomy as persons and citizens, along with their intellectual and career development. We have worked to embody this goal of developing a capacity for self-directed learning—along with the letter and spirit of each of the related Goals—in every aspect of the principles for curriculum and assessment and the design of policies to support them.

The Compact also emphasizes that learning "must begin and end with students themselves," as the ultimate authors of their own understandings; and that the "service delivery model" of packaged schooling and passive students is not a model for genuine learning. We thoroughly agree. The Compact envisions the students as "curious, questioning, restless, thoughtful, eager to use their minds, imaginative, willing to accept the occasional tedium, and increasingly self-directed and self-disciplined." We heartily concur. The Compact insists that parents must be active, participating partners in their child's education, helping to sustain the values and atmosphere of "shared purpose and consistent expectations;" that teachers must be well-supported in terms of resources and time for collegial consultation; that schools must be institutions where shared deliberations and collective inquiry guide learner-centered decisions. We endorse each one of these ideals and the philosophy that undergirds them.

The challenge for all of us is to imagine and then implement a set of policies and practices that can make these commitments real—that can support, from the "top" of the system, collaboration and collegiality throughout the schools and communities in the State. Because we understand that shared purpose cannot be mandated, and shared practice must be invented in each and every school community, we must find ways to stimulate and support locally-inspired deliberation and action aimed at our common State goals. We must do this through policies that build commitment and capacity rather than by regulating practices and constraining the possibilities for uniquely successful strategies. Since learning must begin with students themselves—and with the members of their school communities—we must find ways to help all of the facilitators for student learning to assess and understand where and how students come to the task, so that they can develop means for supporting continued growth toward the learning outcomes we intend for all children.

The Regents' Goals and the New Compact, in their organization as in their details, point to the need for a coherence of educational needs and goals; and to a clear sense that educators, parents, and communities must agree on what must be done in order to arrive at such comprehensive outcomes, to get the best for all students. This "in order to" is inscribed between as well as on the lines of this document, for it forces us to consider what schools and communities must do and be like if we are to have students who know and can do that which constitutes their own "personal best." Schools must operate differently if students are to learn in different ways. These differences must be imagined before they can be implemented. What we know about inspiring organizational change and social invention is that each community must engage in a process in which they wrestle with these questions for themselves, and create their own mandate for how to proceed. At the same time, the State must envision the policy and practical supports needed to assist this process of goal-setting and invention and to sustain the kinds of learning environments that will result.

Our principles for curriculum and assessment, along with our recommendations for schooling design and policy, seek to strike this balance, in which the State's leadership role inspires local innovation, and high standards are achieved without dysfunctional standardization. Our conclusions are informed by much recent research in the disciplines, on teaching, on organizational change, and in education policy analysis. Our recommendations also reflect the findings of such groups as the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), the New York State Career Pathways

Report, and the reports of the State university and City university systems.[1]

Their findings converge on a theme which permeates our recommendations and unites the reforms of the New Compact to the Regents' Goals; there is today no longer a hard and fast distinction between what is needed for higher education and what is needed for "job or career"; or between academic education and vocational education; or between schooling and "real life." Today, our knowledge-based economy requires a capacity for life-long, self-directed learning involving cooperative work on complex tasks in technologically sophisticated, and continually changing, settings. We hope the principles we outline below begin to address the seriousness and the depth of all the complex implications entailed for school and for communities as they begin to actually build systems capable of responding to this new set of challenges.

[1] Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), U.S. Department of Labor. **What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for AMERICA 2000.** Washington, DC: The Commission, June 1991.

Governors' Task Force on Career Pathways for New York State Youth. **Education that Works: Creating Career Pathways for New York State Youth**, September 1992.

State University of New York Task Force on College Entry-Level Knowledge and Skills. **Preliminary Report on Entry-Level Knowledge and Skills.** Albany, NY: The Task Force, February 1992.

Advisory Committee on the College Preparatory Curriculum, Executive Committee of the University Faculty Senate. **A College Preparatory Curriculum for the City University of New York.** New York, NY: The Executive Committee, March 1991.

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT IN THE NEW COMPACT

Implementing *A New Compact for Learning* will require a new vision of curriculum, instruction, and assessment—one that helps schools focus on the development of a greater range of student talents at higher levels of performance for all. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment must emphasize comprehension and understanding, along with applications of knowledge in new and complex situations, rather than rote response and inert knowledge. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment must contribute to the development of students' abilities to use their minds well; to think critically and creatively; to make informed and reasoned judgments; to produce and invent as well as to critique and analyze; and to develop habits of personal responsibility and concern for others.

The shared purposes of curriculum, instruction and assessment are to develop and cultivate the full range of human intelligences and capabilities; to instill the habits of mind and dispositions of character needed to use understanding wisely and humanely; and to develop the skills necessary to live, work, and succeed in a democratic society and an ever-changing world community.

In order to accomplish these goals, curriculum, instruction, and assessment must be designed to encourage active learning in which students evaluate, construct, and generate knowledge, becoming self-initiating, life-long independent learners in the process. They must encourage students to develop their abilities to work alone and with others, to do things competently as well as to think about them clearly, to reason, question, draw connections, compare, relate, contrast, communicate clearly and persuasively, evaluate viewpoints, frame problems, acquire and use evidence, draw inferences, and create new knowledge, understandings, relationships, and products.

These capabilities depend on the development of many kinds of human intelligence—verbal, logical and mathematical, physical and motor, artistic, personal, and interpersonal, not all of which have generally been appropriately valued in school or by the assessment instruments used to evaluate school and student success.

If learning experiences are to be challenging, coherent, and aimed at developing the full range of students' capabilities, then curriculum, instruction, and assessment must also be interrelated and interconnected. What is taught, how it is taught, and how the success of that teaching is interpreted must all be part of a continuous process. They must be seen as mutually dependent and jointly aimed at enriching the continual growth and learning of each student. Schools must view learning as an integrated activity, connecting ideas and understandings within and across disciplines and between school and non-school performance settings. Assessment must be embedded in teaching and learning, rather than "delivered" out of context and, frequently, out of content, at discrete testing moments throughout a student's career. Assessment must be dynamic, rich with information about student potentials as well as progress, and motivating to students, teachers, and schools as it illuminates compelling goals along with the means for reaching them.

A New Vision of Learning-Centered Curriculum

Over the past decade, we have learned a great deal about how people learn. This new understanding requires major changes in how we approach curriculum, teaching, and assessment. First, we understand that learners construct knowledge from complex mental maps they have developed based on their experiences. They start with concepts and then interpret and understand information in light of these concepts. This means that facts do not precede concepts, and "basic" skills do not precede thinking skills as many previous approaches to curriculum assume. Instead, conceptual learning and higher order thinking are the foundations that make all other kinds of learning possible.

In addition, because individual students learn in different ways, at different rates, and from the vantage point of their different experiences, no highly specific, predetermined curriculum can ever be equally effective for all students. To be successful, teachers must meet students where they are and create a bridge between their individual talents, interests, and experiences and common, challenging curriculum goals. This means that teachers and schools must have the flexibility—along with the knowledge, skill, and material resources—needed to be responsive to the students they serve. Especially when the goal is universal high standards for all

students, the ability to take a variety of pathways to get there is critical.

Thus, we need forms of curriculum that encourage the development of students' conceptual abilities and higher order thinking skills—rather than feeding them bits of disconnected information—and that permit teachers to link new concepts to students' very diverse prior experiences and understandings—rather than assuming that students will all learn the same things in precisely the same ways.

As a result, implementing the Compact will require new strategies for supporting and guiding classroom practice—strategies that redefine the State's role from one in which it seeks to prescribe and regulate classroom practice to one in which it clearly defines the goals of education and supports local innovation and creativity in achieving those goals. "Top down support for bottom up reform," the Compact's guiding principle, will depend on strategies that build local capacity for restructuring—through infusions of knowledge, technical assistance, and needed flexibility. These strategies should place the State in the role of enabler of change and facilitator for good practice.

Because there is no "one best system" that can prove equally effective for all students, and because we know that well-intended prescriptions for practice frequently do not lead to the desired results, the State cannot achieve its goals for all children by imagining and enforcing a set of methods by which they will be achieved. Instead, it must set directions, provide supports, monitor results, and ensure safeguards so that neither children nor schools are allowed to "fall through the cracks."

Accordingly, the Council's recommendations for curriculum and assessment create means for assessing learning outcomes—the desired knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students should acquire. These learning outcomes are to be reflected in curriculum frameworks which provide guidance for local curriculum development but are not straitjackets. The curriculum frameworks will articulate broad learning goals within and across disciplines and describe the kinds of skills and abilities students are expected to acquire, but they will not specify the procedures—courses, syllabi, grouping or grading practices—schools must undertake to achieve these goals. Instead, the frameworks provide criteria for curriculum development and identify attributes that curriculum should have in order to ensure that students encounter the kinds of learning experiences to which they are entitled.

School districts are expected and encouraged to develop materials, instructional strategies, and organizational approaches that will enable students to successfully achieve the desired learner outcomes. The State should provide a rich array of curriculum resources and materials along with assessment tools from which schools and teachers can also choose in developing strategies that work for the diverse student populations they serve. Teachers are expected to have sufficient flexibility that allows them to create learning experiences which draw on students' prior understandings, lives, and community contexts in order to develop connections between these experiences and broader curriculum goals.

The State's learning goals—along with locally developed goals and standards—are to be monitored through a system of State program assessments and locally-developed student assessments that carefully distinguish between the State's need for assessment to inform policy, on the one hand, and the local school's need for assessment to inform and improve teaching and learning, on the other. Between its State and local components, the assessment system will provide a view of students' work and learning that is cumulative, multifaceted, and authentic: it will evaluate students' abilities to tackle complex tasks requiring integrated knowledge and application of skills over time and in a variety of contexts. The local component of the assessment program will allow teachers to gauge student growth, progress, strengths, and skills in ways that are useful to instruction. The State component will allow policymakers to gauge local and statewide progress toward desired learning outcomes in ways that direct investments and interventions where they are needed.

The Council's principles for developing curriculum frameworks and assessment, described below, are rooted in the Regents' Goals for education and aimed at helping New York State realize this new vision for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. With the specific recommendations that follow, the Council hopes to make good on the Compact's promise to focus on outcomes rather than procedures while maintaining the State's responsibility for ensuring that all students receive the learning experiences to which they are entitled.

The "Principles for Developing Curriculum Frameworks" provide guidance to the Curriculum and Assessment Committees currently working to articulate learning outcomes in seven areas: Arts and Humanities; English Language Arts; Health, Physical Education, and Home Economics; Languages Other Than English; Mathematics, Science, and Technology; Social Studies; and Technical and Occupational Studies. The companion list of "Principles for an Assessment System" outlines the assumptions and directions the Council has adopted to guide its work with the Committees in developing an integrated approach to State and local assessment that will support student progress toward high standards of learning and performance for all students. A set of additional recommendations on accountability and implementation outlines the Council's views about how these approaches to curriculum and assessment must be embedded in a broader accountability system and supported with appropriate implementation strategies.

Principles for Developing Curriculum Frameworks

1. Curriculum frameworks, in conjunction with high, publicly visible performance standards for *all* students, should define desired learning outcomes aimed at preparing students to assume their multiple roles in society as thoughtful citizens, lifelong learners and literate adults, and workers in a complex and changing global society. These outcomes should be based on a broad consensus of what students should know and be able to do, as well as what habits of responsible citizenship they should acquire.

2. Curriculum frameworks should be organized around core concepts within and across disciplines. These should be pursued through the development of integrated standards for content—what students should know—and performance—what they should be able to do.

3. Curriculum frameworks should support the development of students' abilities to demonstrate in-depth knowledge of core concepts and to generate and apply knowledge in real life situations.

4. Curriculum frameworks should encourage the cultivation of students' thinking and reasoning skills, enabling them to distinguish between evidence and assertion and to analyze and evaluate ideas from a variety of perspectives.

5. Curriculum frameworks should foster instruction that nurtures students' imaginations, creative visions, and aesthetic appreciation.

6. Curriculum frameworks should emphasize and support the mastery of a wide range of communication skills. They should support the development of students' abilities to acquire, manage, employ, and generate information for a range of purposes using a variety of information technologies.

7. Curriculum frameworks should encourage teachers to use a range of teaching strategies that recognize diverse ways of learning and performing and allow for a variety of kinds of evidence about what students have learned.

8. Curriculum frameworks should encourage schools to use other learning settings, including libraries, museums, businesses, and community organizations.

9. Curriculum frameworks should emphasize the interrelatedness and interdisciplinary nature of knowledge and skills. Frameworks should integrate academic and vocational knowledge and skills within and across subject areas.

10. Curriculum frameworks should reflect the diversity of human experience, including diversity of culture, ethnicity, race, gender, class, and religion.

11. Curriculum frameworks should make explicit the personal, civic, social, and intellectual values raised and affirmed within and across disciplines, encouraging students to examine and reflect on these values.

12. Curriculum frameworks should enable schools to meet the Statewide goals and learning outcomes for all students, while encouraging necessary innovation and flexibility in school organization and instruction.

While the goal of uniform high standards for learning outcomes for all students must be clear and vigorously pursued, the Council is committed to implementing the Compact's promise to focus on results, while allowing schools to use many different strategies for achieving them. We recognize that many schools have achieved success with mixed-age groupings of students, nongraded instruction, interdisciplinary coursework, community learning settings, and other variations from the traditional forms of school organization. Over time, these traditional organizational patterns have been translated into curriculum and testing programs and other forms of instructional guidance that have tended to focus more attention on compliance with the curriculum and procedures than on doing what works for students.

Thus, we recommend that curriculum frameworks should articulate learning outcomes for broad levels of schooling (e.g. elementary, middle, high school) rather than grade levels, and should accommodate many different configurations of courses, classes, and instructional arrangements. So as not to prescribe particular organizations of grades, subjects, or groupings of students, curriculum and assessment guidance should be developmentally appropriate, but not tied to particular grade levels. Similarly, such guidance should maintain the integrity of each discipline, but should not be tied to specific course configurations. In addition, creating new forms of school organization that allow close personal contact between students and faculty, by restructuring how courses and students are clustered, should not be discouraged by the ways curriculum guidance is offered. Finally, this kind of work should go on in many settings—for example, in community work settings where internships are pursued as well as in libraries, where children are able to use technology for access to information and ideas, and librarians, like teachers, act as facilitators for learning during and after school hours have ended.

We are also concerned that the State's articulation of learning goals across the seven areas assigned to its Curriculum Committees begins to reduce the fragmentation and inconsistencies apparent in its current system of curriculum guidance. The existing system resembles a patchwork quilt of broad curriculum guidelines for some subjects and grade levels interspersed with specific course syllabi and testing programs that deliver an implicit curriculum frequently at odds with the rhetoric of other intentions and pronouncements. The new curriculum frameworks should aim to develop a coherent vision of important learning outcomes to be sought over the course of students' schooling across the disciplinary areas as well as within each area.

This effort to seek coherence should include the identification and integration of intellectually powerful core concepts within and across the disciplines along with common values, such as honesty, cooperation, teamwork, respect for knowledge and evidence, and respect for other people and cultures. In so doing, the frameworks should seek to encourage interdisciplinary teaching, learning, and assessment in schools. The Council feels this is important for a number of reasons. Students must be prepared to engage real-life tasks and problem-solving, which almost always require interdisciplinary thinking, knowledge, and skills. Such interdisciplinary work enriches the understanding of individual disciplines by helping students understand what the discipline contributes to their ability to think and solve problems. At the same time, interdisciplinary work enables students to capitalize on their areas of strength while extending those strengths to new areas.

As we move to a performance-based system of curriculum and assessment based on universal high standards for all students, it is critical that the State's curriculum frameworks and other guidance not be based on the assumption of a tracked or two-tiered system. Students' access to courses and learning opportunities should not be predetermined by the projected receipt of a different type of diploma, or by premature assignment to an anticipated future life course (e.g. college vs. immediate employment). Neither students' differential talents nor the world they are entering allow for such tidy, unchanging distinctions in what they ought to care about, be good at, or be prepared for.

The new standards require attention to students' talents and diverse modes of learning and performance without tracking them into programs or collections of courses that restrict their learning opportunities. While many different grouping arrangements can be useful aids to instruction and student learning—for example, cooperative work groups, grouping and regrouping for differential instruction in particular skills, and students' selections of different activities or courses based on their interests and aptitudes—more rigid forms of tracking can reduce students' access to knowledge. Students' choices of courses should not be determined by whether they

believe they may be bound for college or work after high school, but by their needs, interests, and talents, which are exhibited in much more individualized ways. There are a number of ways of allowing for specialization of student work at the high school level without the kind of gross tracking into unchanging course options that currently occurs. Using their own resources, those of other nearby schools, and community colleges, schools should enable a student to simultaneously pursue courses in advanced mathematics and woodworking, for example, based on his or her aptitudes and interests. These possibilities are discouraged, however, by the two-tiered diploma system that encourages tracking in the State.

At all levels of schooling, the implementation of common high-level standards for all will require attention to creating means for open-ended pacing (allowing for more time and different uses of time responsive to student needs), access to a thinking curriculum for all students, and use of multimodal teaching strategies that address the many ways students learn by all teachers. The State's curriculum system ought not to perpetuate distinctions that serve neither students nor our society well. The Council recommends that the State move to a unitary Regents diploma system based on demonstrated performance, with acknowledged levels of distinction also based on performance. All students would be expected to engage challenging coursework aimed at the desired learning outcomes as they work toward a Regents diploma, awarded by exhibition as documented in a Regents portfolio which incorporates performance tasks, projects, and documentation of outcomes as well as performance-based examinations. As described more fully below, those whose work exhibits high levels of performance could receive a diploma with distinction, both for overall performance and in particular subject areas.

To begin to move toward this new vision of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the State will need to provide a variety of curriculum tools, materials, resources and ideas that local educators may draw upon in developing their own curriculum and assessment systems. These systems will continue to include some of the better-developed forms of standardized testing appropriate to the limited purposes they are designed to serve, but supplemented and greatly enriched by assessments that are embedded in the curriculum and teaching process.

As we discuss more fully in the implementation section of this report, the possibilities for student success lie in teachers' abilities to use resources creatively and adaptively on behalf of different student needs and approaches to learning. Thus, we believe the State should invest its efforts in building teachers' knowledge and capacity to address students' diverse needs rather than trying to create the "one best system" of detailed curriculum mandates, which is inherently bound to fail. The State's efforts should include investments in staff development opportunities, Teachers Centers, preservice education, and mentor programs for enhancing teachers' knowledge and skills, along with investments in a rich array of curriculum materials to choose from in addressing student needs.

In line with the Compact's promise, the Council has developed a plan that places its bets for school improvement on supporting better teaching rather than writing better regulations. Yet, one question that often arises in debates about how highly prescribed school curriculum should be is: What happens to students who transfer from one class or school to another? Shouldn't all students be studying the same things in roughly the same ways at basically the same time in order to allow for interchangeability among schools and students? In reality, such uniformity in daily practice does not now exist across schools (even when it is sought), nor would it prove effective in educating students if it were more aggressively enforced. While learning goals must be uniform, teaching strategies must be flexible. To be effective, good teachers must always meet students where they are and take them as far as they can go in developing their talents and abilities. Overspecification of the curriculum for each subject and grade level ultimately reduces the ability of teachers to meet students where they are in order to help them reach for the next level. The curriculum marches on, while many students are left behind—or are left unchallenged.

As one New York State teacher explains:

> Students come to us at different stages of development and levels of preparation, and education increases those differences. In the long run, if a student is good at something, we try to encourage the student to pursue the interest, to excel, which results in inequality, differences, heterogeneity. It happens naturally. Heterogeneity is not a problem to be solved. In fact when embraced, it is a positive force in the classroom....

Instead of the futile prescription of uniform treatments for nonstandardized students, we believe that greater effectiveness and accountability will result from a system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that explicitly attends to students' differences and unique abilities while creating multiple pathways to common goals. In this system, students who move from class to class, teacher to teacher, or school to school will carry their portfolios with them. These will provide a rich documentation of their growth, accomplishments, approaches to learning, and current needs, enabling teachers to meet them where they are, using a wide array of curriculum resources to create and adapt instruction that moves them toward the shared learning outcomes. The assessment system that will support this kind of adaptive teaching and learning is described below.

A New System of Performance-Based Assessment

A major aspect of the Council's deliberations about assessment concerned the development of an integrated, coherent system of assessment that could serve multiple purposes appropriately and well, without unnecessary cost and duplication, and in ways that are supportive of the learning outcomes we want for students. The proposed system includes a variety of strategies aimed at different purposes, each requiring different approaches to assessment and different levels of rigor. Those that are to be used for decisionmaking purposes important to students' educational and occupational futures must be more formal and rigorous than those that are embedded in the instructional process. Those that are intended to inform decisions about individual students must be more richly detailed than those that are intended to inform decisions about program and policy interventions. As a system, though, the assessments should have certain characteristics that support the Compact's goals. They should:

- measure progress toward the full range of goals
- be as authentic as possible (i.e. representing real performance tasks and situations)
- measure higher order skills and abilities (e.g. abilities to analyze, synthesize, apply knowledge in new situations, produce, create)
- emphasize depth and power rather than breadth and surface knowledge
- be criterion-referenced
- report progress beyond minimums toward higher levels of proficiency
- provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge, including many different kinds of performances and multiple assessment strategies and measures
- provide multiple opportunities and occasions for assessment that allow students many opportunities to demonstrate their proficiency and allow teachers to evaluate student growth in a longitudinal, cumulative fashion using several kinds of evidence (e.g. samples of work, observations, performance on tasks)
- be as open as possible, with publicly known standards and criteria
- allow for the determination of student accomplishment by exhibition of performance rather than course credits or seat time.

These criteria are consistent with national trends and developments in the restructuring of assessment that are accompanying the restructuring of education. States across the nation—from California to Connecticut and Vermont to Texas—are engaged in developing outcomes-oriented, performance-based assessment systems aimed at much more challenging skills, abilities, and learning goals. New York is part of this national movement, through its own assessment reforms and its participation in collaborations such as the Council for Chief State School Officers Assessment Consortium and the New Standards project.

This participation in a nationwide set of initiatives, however, should be understood as quite distinct from advocacy of a national test or testing system, several quite different proposals for which have been advanced and debated, but not defined or enacted, at the federal level. We make no endorsement of any of these still-evolving proposals. New York's initiatives and the Council's work are focused solely and explicitly on the improvement of curriculum and assessment for the students of this State, drawing upon the best knowledge and information available, but not abdicating responsibility for standard-setting to external agencies.

The Council developed some basic principles for the development of the overall assessment system for New York State that guide our work and that of the Curriculum Committees. These provide the rationale for the recommendations that follow and are included in Appendix A. The principles stress that assessments must take many different forms suited to their many different purposes; that they must evaluate higher order thinking skills and complex performance abilities as they are used in the world outside of school; that they must support student growth and motivation to achieve—opening up rather than closing down new learning opportunities; and that they must be valid, trustworthy, and reliable. The principles also establish a framework for a State and local assessment system that eliminates duplicative testing, reduces external testing burdens on classroom time; ensures that different State and local needs for assessment are met with high quality, useful information; and assesses the learning opportunities provided to students in school as well as their performances.

In working through the ways in which the multiple purposes of assessment can be best served, the Council developed recommendations for (1) a State system of program assessment; (2) local systems for individual student assessment; and (3) a shared system of State and local assessment for graduation based on exhibitions of performance.

State Evaluation of Programs

The State's major role in assessment should be for the purposes of assessing programs for monitoring and reporting aggregate student performance at the State level. The State's program assessments should be state-of-the art, leading good practice by modeling what is expected of districts and schools, including the use of projects, performance tasks, and other forms of authentic assessment. Some of the current State program evaluation tests (PETs) are among the more innovative assessments used in New York. The State's program should continue to exert leadership in this regard. For the purposes of monitoring, reporting, and program evaluation, assessment can and should be conducted on a sampling basis, rather than testing all students in all schools every year. By virtue of limiting the population of students evaluated, investments in the quality of the assessments can be greater.

The program assessments should be based on the State learning outcomes and curriculum frameworks currently being developed. For each program area, the State's learning outcomes should be the basis for a program of performance-oriented assessment, including interdisciplinary assessment tasks, administered in key areas and at key points in students' development. For each area, districts will be free to develop their own assessment program for their own program audit purposes, but if they do not, must use the State program to evaluate their programs.

The State's assessments should rely on multiple assessment strategies and tasks—for example performance tasks, projects, oral and written examinations—and use a set of performance standards that represent different levels of performance (e.g. proficient, highly proficient, and distinguished). These levels of performance should be reported in concrete terms across the many domains of performance in each field, describing the kinds of tasks students can perform at each level in ways that are understandable to students, parents, teachers, and the general public. Thus we should know, for example, how well students write in terms of the kinds of writing tasks they can perform—a persuasive essay, a research report, a narrative—as well as the aspects of writing they can display—use of evidence, logical structure and argument, use of clear, vivid language, use of conventions, and so on.

As is currently the case, these assessments must be developed to ensure valid, reliable measures of performance, with carefully-developed criteria, standards, and scoring methods used to judge a student's work. The assessments should provide samples of student work that exemplify different levels of performance across different domains of each task, with procedures to enable consistent evaluation of student work across schools and classrooms.

The State's role with respect to the assessment of individual students should change from one of developing and administering tests to supporting the development of local schools' assessment programs. These local assessment systems should be closely tied to teaching and learning, with a primary goal of informing instruction rather than sorting and screening students out of educational opportunities. **The State should evaluate the appropriateness of schools' assessment programs in terms of the nature of assessments and the manner in which they are used, should provide guidelines for the appropriate use of assessment**

data, and should provide options for assessments, for those districts who want to draw upon them in developing their own systems.

Local participation in assessment development is fundamental to school improvement for many reasons: It stimulates a reflective process among staff and the community in support of school change; it heightens commitment to the assessment system; and it assures that curriculum and assessment are aligned. The State' role, then, should nurture this process at the local level by providing access to research, models of assessment, staff development opportunities; and appropriate forms of preservice and administrator preparation.

Local Assessment of Students

The State should charge local districts with developing their own assessment systems for providing information about and guiding instruction for individual students. These should be guided by the State's learning outcomes, plus other learning goals and standards developed at the local level, and should be consistent with and complementary to the State assessment program. **The local assessments should be multifaceted and cumulative, should engage a range of performance modes and rely on several assessment strategies—including observation of students, samples of student work, and performance tasks. The local assessment systems would be approved by the State and would meet the criteria for scope, authenticity, openness, compatibility with higher learning goals, and multiplicity of assessment strategies and opportunities described at the beginning of this section**.

Cumulative assessments of student progress and performance would be required for evaluation at each schooling level, e.g. early elementary, middle grades, high school. Local schools and districts should determine when these cumulative assessments occur, depending on the ways in which they have chosen to organize schooling levels. These assessments, which should include a portfolio of student work and evaluations of student performance, must be longitudinal in nature, taking student progress and individual talents into account along with levels of performance. They should be used to inform instruction, not to deny students access to further learning opportunities.

The State should establish a body to evaluate and approve local assessment systems, including both the assessments used and the manner in which they are used. This Assessment Quality Assurance Panel would be comprised of appropriate curriculum and assessment experts and SED personnel along with local educators expert in curriculum and assessment issues. The panel would provide a means for providing guidance to local districts about how to structure an assessment system that provides high quality, valid, and reliable data about students that is also instructionally useful. It would ensure that the State's responsibility to ensure appropriate, comparable assessment of students is carried out as the State's manner of discharging its role is changing.

Meanwhile, a school quality review process currently under development by the State Education Department would periodically provide schools with developmental information about how well their assessment systems (as well as their curriculum and teaching practices) are functioning to achieve the school's and State's goals for supporting students in attaining the desired learning outcomes. The school quality review establishes a process of collaborative school development in which external reviewers, local practitioners, and Education Department staff assist school's staff in examining the quality of teaching and learning. The process engages everyone involved with the school in a constructive dialogue about its progress and that of its students. The Assessment Quality Assurance Panel and the school review process, though independent of each other, would both organize their work around the State's learning outcomes, a common knowledge base about teaching and learning, and an understanding of authentic assessment practices.

Local assessment systems should meet established professional standards for assessment use. For example, no major decision regarding a student should be made on the basis of a single piece of evidence (e.g. a test score). Decisions about students—including placement or promotion decisions—should be based on the use of at least three types of data and evidence: samples of student work, teacher observation, and performance tests or tasks.

The State should encourage local practitioners to develop innovative and thoughtful assessment programs by inviting local initiatives and supporting local development with assessment options. Among the resources the State can provide is access to a portfolio or bank of assessment ideas, tasks, and instruments that have been developed through the

New Standards Project, the partnership schools' initiatives, the Coalition of Essential Schools' exhibitions, the Council of Chief State School Officers' assessment group, and other local and State assessment initiatives. The State should reprioritize its testing program and energies to link more effectively to the restructuring of assessment that is going on nationwide and to the range of options available.

The relationship of local districts to the State and the process for implementing this part of the Compact could be described as follows:

The State will be issuing broad statements of learning outcomes describing what students should know and be able to do at graduation, and at certain developmental points during their school careers. These provide direction regarding the goals of curriculum and teaching, but leave latitude for local districts to decide how they will structure students' learning activities.

Within this framework, districts should start convening conversations in the local community to determine what they value, what they want students to do, and how they think their goals can be best accomplished. The State and local districts should encourage schools to establish their own educational outcomes that are consistent with and may extend beyond State goals, both in terms of their domain and level of mastery, and should facilitate the convening of local school constituencies to establish such goals and assessments.

Using the general principles expressed in the outcomes and curriculum frameworks, local districts and schools should develop their curriculum strategies and assessment plans.

The State's role should be to support districts in developing these systems and to provide assessment options, along with research and information about assessment strategies and issues. The State would not prescribe what tools districts must use; however, it should—as part of its role to evaluate and ensure the appropriateness of local systems—proscribe certain inappropriate uses of tests.

The Council feels strongly that such proscription should include the use of mass-administered, standardized tests for students below grade 4 as the sole basis for making any major decision, including program placements, tracking, and promotions. In terms of existing external program requirements, the State should support districts in developing alternatives to mass-administered standardized tests—as well as pull-out programs—for Chapter 1 purposes (in line with upcoming changes in federal law).

The State should also proscribe the use of such tests for placing students in gifted and talented programs as both an inappropriate use of tests and an undesirable encouragement to tracking. The Council believes that a fundamental tenet of the Compact is that schools should provide for adaptive teaching within a thinking curriculum for all students. In the context of multiple intelligences, all students have gifts and talents that must be nurtured. A curriculum that nurtures higher order thinking and performance skills, along with individual gifts and talents, should be available to all students. Assessment should be structured to help identify students' talents and to shape instruction so that it uses them as a basis for learning across the curriculum.

Graduation by Exhibition: A Shared State and Local Responsibility

Graduation standards, to be met by exhibition, should be developed by the State, in consultation with experts from higher education and local school districts. The graduation standards should specify the kinds of competencies students must demonstrate to graduate, derived from the State's learning outcomes. Achievement of these competencies should be documented through a Regents Portfolio—a compilation of record data, projects, products, performance tests or tasks, observations and evaluations by teachers, attestations, oral or written examinations, and other evidence that the competencies have been achieved.

The development of the Regents Portfolio standards must occur in close collaboration with representatives of higher education, who should be encouraged to use the requirements as part of their standards for higher education admissions. Existing joint secondary-higher education committees, such as the SUNY Task Force on College Entry-Level Knowledge and Skills have already made similar recommendations for assessment reform and could serve as the appropriate bodies for coordinating this work.

The actual form, content, and assessment of the portfolio requirements should be developed locally. The graduation portfolio should grow out of and be related to the cumulative assessment strategies used throughout the earlier grades by the local school or district. The school's assessment system should allow for the accumulation of portfolio credits toward graduation throughout the students' high school years. Schools should be encouraged to engage their faculties in collaborative development of portfolio standards and criteria as well as team evaluations of student work, as this approach enriches the assessment process by marshalling multiple viewpoints and varied perspectives. One such approach to graduation by portfolio in a New York State partnership school is described here as an example of one kind of system that might be developed.

[A sidebar describing Central Park East Secondary School's portfolio graduation requirements will be inserted near here. See pp. 33-34 for the text.]

[NOTE: Other sidebars on local performance standards and assessment will also be added before the document goes out for wide public dissemination.]

Local districts' portfolio requirements, which would address both the State outcomes and local standards, would be approved by the State as part of its overall evaluation of the total local assessment system. Because of the importance of establishing the validity and comparability of a wide variety of performance-based assessments used for graduation decisions, this review process should be augmented and validated by research designed to determine the relationship between performance on the assessments used for graduation and postsecondary outcomes, including success in higher education and employment.

The Regents Portfolio, which would require several types of assessment in a number of different areas, would provide for common standards for all students but would allow for varied content. For example, students might meet the requirement for demonstrated mathematics proficiency by designing and building a house to scale or by developing a "pure" mathematical proof, so long as both met the standards established. Schools and districts would be expected to develop their own portfolio systems to meet the State and local standards.

While the graduation portfolio would be developed locally, districts should have the option of satisfying portions of their portfolio requirements by selecting from existing (and evolving) State developed assessments and other options the State makes available. Performance-based options (e.g. projects, performance tasks, and portfolios) for all Regents examinations should be developed immediately for districts that want to choose them. These should include interdisciplinary assessments—for example, a Regents Humanities assessment—that could be selected by districts that have organized interdisciplinary coursework. Districts should also be encouraged to submit performance-based options for Regents examinations to the State for approval. Over time, the entire Regents assessment system must evolve to become more compatible with the new learner outcomes, relying on performance-oriented assessment tasks requiring challenging in-depth study rather than reliance on multiple-choice testing technologies.

The Regents assessment system should also become a unitary rather than a bifurcated system, so that the assessments students encounter are not tied to a rigid tracking system. Regents Competency Tests in specific subject areas should be eliminated and replaced by Regents assessments that allow for different levels, but not kinds, of performance. Thus, for example, rather than a Regents examination in U.S. history and a separate RCT in social studies—which are determined by track and lead to different diplomas, a set of performance-based assessments in social studies would be developed for all students and made available as options for districts which have not developed a State-approved option they prefer.

Satisfactory completion of all of the portfolio requirements would entitle students to a Regents diploma. The Regents diploma should become a goal for all students. A student's level of proficiency would determine the level of distinction on the diploma (e.g. proficient, highly proficient, distinguished). Such levels of distinction should be developed to recognize excellence both across-the-board and in specialized areas. Thus, for example, a student might earn a distinction in mathematics as well as a Regents diploma awarded at the "distinguished" level. These distinctions would differ from the current two-tier diploma system in that they are based on demonstrated performance on complex tasks (i.e. outcomes) rather than on courses taken within predetermined tracks (i.e. inputs or processes). They

would reward effort, allow for acknowledgment and development of students' individual talents, and discourage blanket tracking.

Reporting of Results

Reporting of student performance results will need to change alongside the reforms in assessment. One necessary change will be the reporting of assessment information according to criterion-referenced performance levels which describe specific learning outcomes, rather than norm-referenced percentile rankings. Reports of student performance should describe how many students can actually perform particular kinds of tasks, rather than merely assigning a numerical score that has no substantive meaning to students, parents, teachers, or the public. We should know, for example, that 80 percent of students can write a persuasive essay that uses evidence effectively, rather than that the average New York student scored a 72 on a particular test.

Reporting should also allow for progress standards that are based on aggregated longitudinal data about individual students. That is, data should allow for analysis of how much actual growth in performance students have experienced, rather than merely averaging school-level data that is influenced by shifts in student population and other factors.

A new form of what the State now presents as its Comprehensive Assessment Report (CAR) should emphasize descriptive information about school practices, instructional programs, staffing, and other aspect of students' learning opportunities, built upon the evidence base developed in the school quality review process. Reporting should also include analysis of funding, resources, and allocations of expenditures, between schools and districts as well as among expenditure categories.

The CAR should also provide descriptive data about school programs and related student outcomes. For example, an analysis of State program assessment data in mathematics should describe the kinds of mathematical tasks students can and cannot accomplish as well as the nature of the mathematics instruction they are receiving: who is taking what kinds of mathematics curriculum and what occurs in classrooms.

The goal of the reporting system should be to enhance accountability by providing information that will enable the public to evaluate how well the State and districts are progressing toward attainment of New York's goals for outcomes, practices, and resource equity, and also to analyze how and why.[2]

[2] Data from the state NAEP would provide some of this kind of information to augment School Quality Review data and much enriched forms of assessment information.

IMPLEMENTING THE COMPACT IN A CONTEXT OF SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY

The Council believes that the Compact must be accompanied by new and more effective means for achieving genuine accountability in our State's schools. Although accountability has frequently been thought of as measuring schools' and students' test scores, we concur with the Compact that measuring schools is not the same thing as improving them. We believe that accountability must include those things that the State and school districts do to provide high quality education for all students as well as to evaluate school offerings and student performance. We must construct and implement a vision of "shared accountability" that focuses on the provision of high quality education for all students and that includes parents, community organizations, businesses, and other citizens along with State agencies, school boards, administrators, teachers, and students.

The foundation for genuine accountability should rest on a sturdy tripod of responsibilities for school inputs and resources, professional standards of practice, and standards for desired learning outcomes. Attention to all three of these areas is necessary to ensure that students receive the learning opportunities to which they are entitled. In each area, the State, school districts, and schools must assume their different appropriate roles for establishing standards which convey goals and expectations, not always mandates—to guide their actions.[3]

Shared Accountability

The State's "outcome standards" described throughout this report are aimed at encouraging the development of students' capacities for higher order thinking and performance, for creativity, analysis, conceptual integration, and invention. Alongside these standards for desired learning outcomes, described in the previous section, the State must also consider how to support school **delivery systems** (i.e., inputs and resources) and **practices** that are likely to produce these valued student abilities and that fulfill the State's responsibility to children. Standards for inputs and resources should ensure that government agencies—States and school districts—provide the wherewithal for all schools, in rich and poor neighborhoods alike, to offer the curricular opportunities and programs required for the achievement of student performance standards. The State's annual report (Chapter 655) should report on the progress of New York in meeting its delivery standards for inputs and resources.

Standards of practice should guide school organizations in developing approaches that will enable students to learn those things that are assumed by standards for their performance. They describe the areas in which schools and educators can be expected to exercise their professional responsibilities to students based on current knowledge of best practice, commitment to student welfare, and understanding of student needs. These standards would help inform the State's school quality review process, in which teams of local practitioners and State Education Department staff visit schools as "critical friends" who examine the teaching and learning process and create an "evidence base" for describing school practices to parents and other members of the school community.[4]

State and Local Responsibilities

As the Compact unfolds and authority is realigned to follow responsibility, the State, school districts, and schools must each become accountable for the policies they adopt: for ensuring that their decision making processes rely on the best available knowledge and the interests of children, for evaluating the subsequent effects of the policies—on teaching and learning, on student access to opportunities, on curriculum goals and for changing those policies or regulations which prove to be counterproductive. Local districts, like the State, should begin to evaluate how over-regulation of school-level practice can be relieved, by granting waivers from unnecessary constraints and moving toward new forms of accountability based on improved outcomes for all students.

[3] This discussion draws heavily on a paper prepared for New York State's "Standards of Excellence" project: Linda Darling-Hammond, Standards of Practice for Learner-Centered Schools. NY: National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching, Teachers College, Columbia University.

[4] This school quality review process should be supportive and useful to schools in their own processes of ongoing inquiry and improvement. To avoid its becoming a prescriptive approach, the reviews should not be used for accountability purposes. Another process should be developed for schools that are having substantial difficulty and require intervention. Such an intervention process is also discussed in this section.

As a new accountability system evolves, each level of the system should assume its appropriate kind of responsibility.

The State should be responsible for providing equitable and sufficient resources to schools, and for encouraging equitable and appropriate practices in schools.[5] In terms of curriculum and assessment, the State should establish broad learning outcomes and a system for assessing programs. The State should also provide assistance to districts in developing and evaluating the appropriateness of local districts' and schools' assessment programs for programs and students.

To enhance the accountability of the overall system, the State should evaluate both the appropriateness of local school/district assessment programs and the effectiveness of the State's overall assessment program, including each of its component parts. To evaluate whether the system is producing the kinds of outcomes intended and desired, the State should sponsor research, on a sample basis, about what happens to students and their learning after high school, evaluating their success at subsequent transition points (college, employment post-secondary training) and beyond.

Schools districts should be responsible for ensuring adequacy and sufficiency along with equity in the distribution of school resources and for creating communication and feedback processes that make them responsive to the needs and concerns of parents, students, and school-level staff. They should develop systems for evaluating programs (or may choose to adopt State assessments for this purpose) and should support schools' development of assessment systems for individual students.

Schools should be accountable for operating in ways that reflect professional knowledge and the interests of children and for equity in the distribution of learning opportunities to children. They should establish professional development opportunities which enable staff to continually learn and refine their skills; create processes for communication, problem identification and problem-solving; and create methods for involving and responding to the concerns and ideas of parents, students, and staff.

In terms of curriculum and assessment, schools should be responsible for developing appropriate systems of assessment that inform instruction, by providing sufficient information for making decisions about individual students.

Teachers and other staff should be accountable for identifying and meeting the needs of individual students responsibly and knowledgeably based on professional standards of practice, for continually evaluating how well their own practices and those of their colleagues are accomplishing this goal, for seeking new knowledge and information, and for continually revising their strategies to better meet the needs of students.

While it is essential that all of the components of the educational system be accountable for performing their roles in this effort, it is clear that these goals cannot be achieved without a sense of accountability on the part of students, parents, and the community. They must "buy into" and hold themselves accountable for achieving these new goals as well. As modern management theory demonstrates, excellence is achieved only when all participants are involved in decisions about what to do and how to do it, and can hold each other accountable for performance. That is why a fully accountable system must rely on both State leadership and vigorous local participation and engagement.

Supporting and Ensuring Accountability

Two kinds of processes are critical for supporting and ensuring a kind of accountability that actually results in better education for children: two-way communication processes that provide important information to parents and other constituencies and needed feedback to schools, along with processes for recognizing school success and remedying school failure. The State's new learning outcomes and assessment systems will not produce responsible and responsive education for students without more effective processes in place for attending to these crucial functions.

[5] In addition to providing equitable funding to schools, the State should report on the resources made available in all schools and districts, while evaluating the adequacy and use of funding and resources for schools that have been identified as failing. The State and local district together must take responsibility for rectifying such inadequacies in opportunity to learn as are found to exist in these schools.

Constituency Communication

Information sharing is an important part of shared accountability. Each local school district and school should have regular occasions and means for initiating a dialogue and exchange of ideas. This dialogue should elicit input about school performance and ideas for school improvement from parents, students, staff, and other members of the school community. It should also include regular occasions for reporting to constituents about school practices and student progress. This reporting should extend beyond test scores and other quantitative data to include substantive descriptions of what schools are doing and what students experience in terms of programs, curriculum, and teaching. The reports should also discuss student access to school curriculum opportunities in terms of student program placements and course-taking opportunities, as well as progress toward graduation. Academic achievement should be reported in terms of longitudinal progress for students over the time they have been in the school or district, and in terms of concrete abilities and tasks students have mastered, rather than abstract percentile rankings.

Methods for communicating to parents and the public about schooling should include student exhibitions of their work, including displays and demonstrations of what they have learned and accomplished. Like the town meetings and recitations conducted at schools in the early days of this country, people should be able to see what schools are doing and what their students can do as a result. These processes of communication should be cooperative, providing opportunities for the community to actively participate.

In the spirit of fuller and more educationally informative communication, the State's Comprehensive Assessment Report (CAR) should be redesigned to include the kinds of information about school and student performance and progress described above. The CAR should be used in public forums at the local and State levels to stimulate discussion about future plans for and improvements in educational policies, structures, and practices.

Recognition and Remedy

The Compact promises to reward success and remedy failure. We believe that a more decentralized and learner-centered approach to curriculum and assessment will succeed only if these promises are well kept. We are persuaded that the most important barriers to restructuring are the isolation of school practitioners and the paucity of learning opportunities available in schools, along with unequal access to the resources needed to provide challenging teaching for all students. Consequently, the State's efforts to offer incentives for reform and safeguards for students in failing schools must be structured to enhance opportunities for school learning and professional development, and to ensure that necessary resources—ranging from qualified teachers to curriculum materials—are put in place where schools are failing. An effective intervention system for diagnosing the underlying sources of school failure and for remedying them is an essential component of an accountability system that works for students.

Schools that demonstrate that they are serving students well should be recognized both by having their success documented to be shared with other schools and by having greater autonomy from State regulation. The means of recognizing school initiative and achievement should promote learning and cooperation, rather than competition among schools, enabling us to create not just learner-centered classrooms, but also learning organizations and a learning-oriented system of education in the State of New York. One means for doing this is to award grants to successful schools to further develop, document, and share their practices with other schools in school-to-school networks, much like the teacher-to-teacher networks that have been so successful in stimulating classroom and curriculum reforms. Such strategies are already in use in New York through such vehicles as the Excellence and Accountability Program (EAP) schools, the Compact Partnership schools, and the Coalition of Essential Schools. These should be built upon and expanded with a more widespread program for recognizing, documenting, and sharing school successes.

Intervention strategies that are diagnostic and provide supports should be developed for schools that are not serving students well. When the State ascertains that there are serious shortcomings in a school's practices and educational outcomes for students, a process should be triggered that enables and requires State and local district intervention and problem-solving. This problem-solving process should involve a qualified team of educators in

evaluating the nature and sources of problems. It should deal with the root causes of school failure—including the availability and use of qualified personnel, curriculum resources, student access to high-quality curriculum and teaching, teaching and administrative strategies, organizational structures, student grouping and promotion practices, and other core features that define students' experiences in school.

The local school, in cooperation with the district, should develop a plan for remedying these problems that meets with State approval. The State and district should cooperatively assume responsibility for ensuring that the resources and technical assistance needed to implement the plan are made available. If policy changes are needed to implement the plan or to ensure that the problems experienced by the school do not recur on a regular basis (in that school or in other schools), then the State and local district should also assume responsibility for developing new policies that are more supportive of school success and that ensure students' entitlement to high quality education is protected.

It is critical that the State's efforts to recognize success and remedy failure be based on thoughtful, educationally sound means for identifying schools that are succeeding or failing. We have learned from experience with other policy initiatives that when incentives are triggered by simplistic measurements such as average school test scores, perverse incentives are created that harm students. Since such measures can be manipulated with changes in school population, schools often seek to boost their average test scores in educationally counterproductive ways: by encouraging low-scoring students to drop out or transfer, by refusing to admit low-scoring students, by retaining them in grade so that their scores look better on grade equivalent scores, or by placing them in special education so that their scores don't count.

New York's efforts to support school success and provide student safeguards must be more sophisticated—and more educationally productive—than these mechanistic approaches have proved to be. Our measures need to be based on the growth and success of all students in the school and on educationally sound evaluations of school practices. The incentive structure must provide incentives for schools which provide wonderful forms of education to be rewarded for opening their doors to the students who are in the greatest educational need and for supporting the spread of these educational innovations to as many other schools as possible.

Implementation

The Council recognizes that the changes implied by the Compact and by our companion recommendations will require rethinking and restructuring of many fundamental aspects of current school operations, including school structures, the ways in which staff and time are allocated and used, the kinds of teaching strategies that are employed, the ways in which adults and students are organized for instruction and the relationships of schools with parents, students, and their communities. Implementation will depend upon organizational development as well as individual practitioner learning about new possibilities and practices. These kinds of reforms cannot be accomplished by mandate. They require investments in the capacity of schools and school people to reflect upon and analyze their practices and to develop alternative possibilities, along with infusions of knowledge and information about strategies that can transform curriculum, teaching, and assessment.

The Council identified a number of factors as critical to the implementation of the Compact and these recommendations. Two of them—funding and staff development—are singled out for special attention, and an outline for a comprehensive implementation plan follows.

Funding—There are three related aspects of school funding that will influence the implementation of the Compact in important ways.

(1) **Equity in funding**—As part of the State's fundamental accountability, it should be seeking adequate and equitable per pupil allocations of funds (adjusting for students' special needs) between districts and within districts. It will be unfair and ultimately impossible to hold schools and students accountable for common outcomes if the State cannot be held accountable for the equitable distribution of resources.

(2) **Reallocation of educational resources**—In order to provide for the time necessary for teachers to conduct the kinds of teaching and assessment envisioned by the State's learning outcomes, for students to learn at their own paces, and for investments in ongoing teacher consultation and learning, schools and districts should be

considering how to reallocate resources in ways that put more educational money in classrooms than in peripheral programs. This means investing in creating more personalized environments with high quality teaching in the first instance so that students are prevented from failing, rather than investing primarily in the bandaids that follow when the system has failed—attendance officers, security guards, remediation programs, and special categorical programs for students who have already fallen through the cracks. It also means investing more in teachers' capacity for teaching diverse learners well rather than in supervisory and inspection systems designed to compensate for the lack of investment in teachers. Changing the current situation will require deregulation and rethinking of staffing patterns as well as categorical program requirements at the State and local levels.

(3) **Funding for building school and teacher capacity**—Finally, implementing the Compact and the new curriculum and assessment system will require special funding for school and district-level technical assistance, staff development, and reforms of teacher and administrator preparation programs to enable development and use of the new approaches to curriculum and assessment.

It should also be noted that a commitment to the concept that "all children can learn" requires attention to children's development from birth—emotional and verbal support, child care, preschool education, and supports for physical and mental health. This means that broader societal supports for child welfare must accompany school reforms, and that schools must be structured so that they can relate effectively to a wide range of other services which students need to learn successfully. Though quality education cannot be bought at bargain prices, it is far less expensive than the costs of so many of our students leaving school facing a lifetime of low self-esteem, poor productivity, and periodic welfare dependency.

Staff development and technical assistance—The kinds of reforms called for by the Compact require major investments in both *teacher and administration knowledge* about curriculum, teaching, and assessment and *organizational capacities* to support these kinds of learning and assessment opportunities. Furthermore, the kinds of capacity-building activities needed must extend beyond traditional approaches: one-shot inservice days will not be sufficient to transform the culture and practices of schools. The State must find new and effective means for investing in **staff development, organizational development**, and **reforms of teacher and administrator preparation programs**.

Both staff development and initial preparation for teachers and administrators should help develop understandings of:

—the purposes of *A Compact for Learning*, including much higher learning expectations for all students, and major reorganization of education;

—how to teach and assess in ways that identify and support different learning styles, talents, and modes of performance;

—how to facilitate higher order learning and students' capacities to learn independently (i.e. helping students learn how to learn, to access and use information, to generate knowledge);

—how to develop, use, and evaluate the products of a range of assessment strategies, including teacher observations, student work samples (portfolios, projects, and performance tasks), and performance tests.

Staff development should be conceived as ongoing and embedded in the process of developing and evaluating curriculum and assessment tasks. As teachers and students engage in these teaching, learning, and assessment activities—and as teachers consult with one another in collectively developing, analyzing, and evaluating student work—a powerful form of learning occurs. An important part of staff development, then, should include time—along with resources of research, information, and expertise—for teachers to work together on the development and implementation of the assessment system. Changes in school schedules (and concomitant hiring of additional staff to allow for new allocations of time and people) will be important.

Teachers centers, principals centers and local universities that have developed expertise can be tapped to serve as resources for staff development to augment other school district resources. The State should sponsor the development, synthesis, and systematic dissemination of research and information about new forms of assessment so that schools and districts have ready access to these resources for assessment development and staff development.

Libraries can be used more creatively as sources of information for schools and teachers about these issues.

Strategies and supports for organizational development will also be important: schools and districts must learn how to organize themselves to engender and support new forms of teaching, learning, and assessment. Networks of schools and districts should be important bases for this kind of learning. SED regional teams should focus on providing supports for organizational learning and restructuring. Technical assistance should be less a one-on-one consulting relationship than a process of helping districts and schools forge connections to each other and to the resources and expertise necessary to help them explore new organizational approaches.

Finally, the ongoing nurturance of learner-centered teaching in New York State will depend on the ongoing work of schools of education in preparing practitioners for the more demanding and productive forms of teaching and management required in Compact schools. Incentives to stimulate and then institutionalize innovations in teacher education and administrator education will be needed. Professional development schools which prepare incoming teachers and administrators in partnerships between universities and local school systems should be created in schools that demonstrate "leading edge" practices that support the goals of the Compact.

A Plan for Implementation

The Council feels strongly that the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment report should be managed in congruence with the implementation of all other parts of the Compact. The several strands of the Compact should be compatible and coordinated. In addition, it is imperative that the implementation of this Council's recommendations proceed in careful alignment, such that the Regents' Goals, the State's learning outcomes, the curriculum frameworks, and the assessment system all work together to support the goals of the Compact. The Council recommends that implementation plans include at least the following stages and strategies:

(1) ***Development of a long-range plan for actualizing the Compact and these recommendations with incremental steps toward full implementation***—It is important for districts to know where the State is headed over the next ten years, and to know what steps will be taken along the way. The changes need to be as sweeping as the Compact's promises imply, yet they need to occur incrementally, allowing for appropriate transitions and learning opportunities, for local experimentation, and State and local adjustments. The plan should not compromise the desired goals by limiting the endpoint to what is feasible today, yet it should not compromise the attainment of those goals by seeking to turn the system on its head overnight. The plan should describe some changes that can be made immediately, some changes that can be made gradually by the provision of options and alternatives for districts that are prepared to use them, and some that will be made over a period of years.

(2) ***Public information and involvement***—Initially and throughout the implementation process, it will be very important to engage in public dialogue and to develop strategies for public involvement. A "caravan" of State Education Department, Council, and Curriculum Committee representatives should be organized to present the plan around the State, discussing why these changes are proposed, what they consist of, and why they are important now. Other continuing strategies for informing and involving the public could include steps to bring community members together to work through parts of the curriculum and assessment plan, such as the development of local learning goals and standards and the development of assessment strategies, much in the way Vermont developed its portfolios. There should be several layers of participation, with a cross-section of parties involved in development, school practitioners and other community members commenting, then additional discussion and refinement within professional organizations and school agencies. The process should include parent education and should involve networking with community groups, libraries, museums, workplaces, church groups, and other agencies in the community. It should illustrate the participatory, collaborative model for accountability and assessment envisioned by the Compact.

(3) ***Support and dissemination of promising practices***—The State should learn from local innovations and find ways to share knowledge about successful practices. New York already has a number of initiatives underway in which schools and districts are engaged in transforming curriculum and assessment in the ways recommended here. The Compact partnership program, the EAP schools, the Middle-Level Challenge Schools, the Coalition of Essential

Schools network, and districts participating in the New Standards project are examples. These initiatives should be documented and disseminated in a way that draws out lessons for practice and for policy, including regulations or deregulation needed to support the new standards and assessments. To assist other districts in learning about how to stimulate change, the State Education Department should publicize innovations and the variances it has approved, educating other schools about the freedom offered by the Compact and what can be done with it. The State should support the synthesis and dissemination of research and knowledge about new curriculum and assessment practices through libraries, networks, centers, and other means.

In addition, the State should consider expanding the school partnership program to stimulate more widespread experimentation, and should launch pilots that are designed to try out particular ideas that are part of the plan. Because districts are at different stages of implementing the Compact, the State should also create a District Partnership Program which frees up selected districts from existing regulations, enabling them to demonstrate, in cooperation with the State, that they can develop their own systems of accountability of assessment in a holistic manner, rather than requesting waivers or clearances one at a time.

(4) ***Developing and enacting legislation and regulations needed to implement the plan***—The SED should conduct a thorough review and analysis of what statutory and regulatory changes are needed to implement the plan, and launch those immediately. The SED should also identify and seek to remove regulatory barriers that currently exist and would make the implementation of the plan difficult or impossible for local schools and districts. The State should seek to avoid layering ever more requirements on local districts without removing pre-existing requirements that conflict or interfere with the Compact's intentions. In particular, the State needs to remove procedural requirements for specific course-taking, grade-level organizations, or school structures that impede implementing the Compact's promise to focus on what students actually know and can do as a result of schooling.

(5) Developing and enacting a budget for implementing the plan—The SED should analyze the areas and types of funding needed to provide the implementation supports described here and create a budget to pursue them.

(6) Creating and implementing a plan for staff development and technical assistance which uses a variety of existing State resources—school networks, Teachers Centers, universities, libraries, SED teams—and designates what additional resources may need to be created to ensure that districts, schools, and teachers have the capacity to engage in the kinds of practices required for student success with these new learning outcomes.

This plan should include needed changes in teacher and administrator preparation programs, and investment strategies for encouraging those changes, to ensure that educators are prepared to develop and use these kinds of teaching and assessment practices.

(7) Integrating the school review process with the curriculum and assessment reforms—The school quality review process currently under development will be an important component of the overall accountability system and an important tool for organizational learning and development. Care should be taken to ensure that it is developed in tandem with, and as a complement to, the implementation of new standards, curriculum, and assessments.

(8) Evaluation—The State must plan for how it will evaluate the appropriateness of local district/school assessment systems. The State should also plan for continuing evaluation and revision of each component of this new system as they operate individually and in combination. We should assume that this is a learning process and plan to continually reflect on how things are going, assuming the system will evolve and change over time.

APPENDIX A

Principles for an Assessment System

1. The assessment system should embody the learning outcomes that are established in the curriculum frameworks, and should include aspects of the school program that affect the achievement of student outcomes.

   —Assessment tasks should reflect integrated performance skills as they are used in the world outside of school.

   —The demands posed by assessment tasks should include the full range of performances and abilities desired of students, extending beyond recall of facts and simple operations to critical analysis and reflection, synthesis of information and integration of skills, problem structuring and problem solving, production, imagination, and invention.

   —The assessment system should create multiple strands of evidence about student abilities, their processes of learning, and achievements, incorporating different types of tests, tasks, and documentation (e.g., written and oral examinations, performance tasks, student projects, cumulative portfolios of student work, records of achievement, structured observations and teachers' descriptive statements).

2. The many different purposes of assessment require a variety of assessment strategies tailored to meet those purposes. No single test or vehicle can serve all purposes equally well. The assessment system for New York should be designed to provide appropriate mechanisms for:

   providing a wide variety of useful information about individual student capacities, growth, and progress that can

   -identify students' talents, their developed abilities, and their needs.

   -inform instruction, assist reflective practice by providing information on students' progress and performance in an integrated ongoing fashion.

   -communicate expectations, achievements, and progress to students, parents, and communities in ways that are open and supportive of self-assessment.

   -support decisions about school graduation.

   -support local dialogue, teacher development, and school improvement and restructuring.

   improving student learning and performance by stimulating productive school and teaching practices that

   -focus on challenging learning goals for all students

   -help all students learn, and intervene to prevent students from failing

   -promote student (and school) effort and valued behaviors

monitoring and reporting on overall student achievement and progress

evaluating State and local programs

developing means by which schools, districts, communities, and the State can hold themselves accountable for focusing on the needs of learners and improving the services and opportunities they provide

3. The assessment system should include both State and local components focusing on challenging learning tools developed at both levels. State and local assessments should be articulated so that they address the desired learning outcomes in complementary ways. Different components of the system will serve different purposes, and the system as a whole will be coherent and sensible from the point of view of teachers and students.

The assessment system should include:

—areas in which effective and authentic assessments are developed by the State

—areas in which schools will be required to develop assessments which serve to assist teaching and learning locally. These should be responsive to the standards they have developed as well as to State learning goals.

—areas which schools will show that they are systematically addressing in their programs, even if these are not directly assessed (e.g., developing student responsibility)

—provisions for schools and local communities to articulate and assess learning outcomes they value in addition to those required.

The assessment system should:

—be constructed to provide needed information appropriately and economically, respecting and supporting schools', teachers', and students' time for teaching and learning. The system should aim to eliminate testing providing information that is duplicative or of low utility, while increasing the quality of information provided by assessments that are closely connected to teaching and learning goals.

—use sample testing for program audit purposes where appropriate, and carefully selected State assessment points supplemented by rich, cumulative local assessments of student progress.

—be developed to ensure that assessments are credible, publicly defensible, reliable and valid for the purposes for which they are used.

—be supported by State technical assistance to local districts, schools, and teachers in developing

-authentic and instructionally valid forms of assessment,

-instructional and organizational strategies to achieve the new learning outcomes, and

-ways of educating the public about the need for and the nature of the changes in curriculum goals, assessment strategies, and school structures.

4.The assessment system should be designed to:

—survey possibilities for student growth, rather than to deny students access to educational opportunities.

—encourage valued and varied kinds of learning and activities in classrooms, providing clear criteria of performance and open access to the processes and products of assessments so that they can motivate learning.

—allow students to judge their own achievement, developing self-direction for attaining higher performance levels.

—provide opportunities for students to engage in extended, real-world, cooperative tasks that provide worthwhile learning experiences illustrating the relevance and utility of the knowledge and skill being acquired.

5.The assessment system should include means for assessing the extent to which school practices and students' opportunities to learn are supportive of desired learner outcomes. An external school review system which incorporates self-examination, focuses on school climate, curriculum and practices should be developed to help schools and communities document, examine, and improve their own practices and to ensure that adequate resources are available and appropriately used in support of student learning.

APPENDIX B

The Curriculum and Assessment Committees

The Curriculum and Assessment Committees were established to work with the Curriculum and Assessment Council—bringing expertise in the school subjects, pedagogy and community organizations ranging from the arts to business and industry to the tasks of revising curriculum and assessment programs in New York.

A number of basic working assumptions and principles guided the collective work of the Council and the specific Committees as the Outcomes were being developed. Both the Council and the Committees began with an integrated charge and set of assignments from the Commissioner; a unified set of concerns about educational needs; and a shared commitment to fundamental change.

Following their charge, the Committees have had the tasks of providing advice concerning the specification of and design of programs for desired learning outcomes; related relevant standards; new systems of assessment; and needed programs of staff development for their respective subject areas. Building on the principles the Council has developed, their specifications of learning outcomes and program directions are to meet Regents' Goals; allow for local choice and design in curriculum and assessment; guide development of educational texts, software, and materials; and inform and assist instruction. The Committees were to consult, as they have, other educators and specialists throughout the State and the nation on matters of desired outcomes, assessment, staff development, and school reform for elementary, middle and secondary education.

Curriculum and Assessment Committees for Mathematics, Science, and Technology, English/Language Arts and Social Studies were appointed in November and December of 1991. These three Committees have completed interim reports which are being reviewed by the Council members and Education Department staff. All reports are providing a focus on philosophy and outcomes while some contain further information related to the charges given to the Committees.

A Committee for Languages Other Than English, was appointed in January of 1992. Committees for Health, Physical Education and Home Economics; Technical and Occupational Studies; and Arts and Humanities were appointed in April and June of 1992 and conducted their first meeting in October 1992.

Co-chairs of the Council and Co-chairs of the Curriculum and Assessment Committees have worked to coordinate the activities of all groups through these initial months to clarify issues, resolve questions and generally bring articulation to the work of all.

The major outcomes developed by the Committees are being further refined by the development of standards at elementary, middle and secondary levels. The Council, the Committees and various interested publics will be reviewing the work throughout the next few months. Feedback from potential users—community and board members, teachers and administrators—will serve to give reactions to outcomes from different standpoints: Are the outcomes sufficiently clear to develop a local program? Do they indicate desired abilities and performances sufficiently clearly to assess them? Do the standards cover important areas and are they high enough? Are the outcomes truly representative of what the publics think the students should know and be able to do?

The Council and Committees will work with the Education Department staff in reviewing the answers that the field provides to these and other relevant questions and in revising the work accordingly.

The broad learning outcomes produced by three of the Committees to date are included below. The Council and Committees will consider these independent pieces of work for those aspects that are generic; pertain to all the subjects and are suitable for application across all the disciplines.

English Language Arts

The broad learning Outcomes for English Language Arts follow. In developing the outcomes for English, the committee considered English not only as a separate discipline within the school curriculum but also as the means of constructing meaning in every area of the individual's life. Therefore, the outcomes reflect the individual's language use in all of the areas of endeavor in which he/she is engaged. The development of such language proficiency is not the sole purview of the English teacher.

The committee defines **outcomes** as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that individuals can and do habitually demonstrate as a result of instruction and experience.

In English Language Arts the **knowledge** essential to students includes an **understanding** of:

—the interpretive (as opposed to the denotative) nature of language
—the control that language exerts on individuals and groups
—the means through which individuals and groups can exert control over language
—the functions and limitations of linguistic and literary conventions
—the value of the language, literature, and perspectives of multiple cultures
—the ways language conventions and interpretations differ across situations
—the aesthetic qualities of language and literature

The essential **skills and attitudes** in language include an **ability and propensity** to:

—critique spoken and written language
—experiment and take risks with language
—construct multiple interpretations
—explore the consequences of language
—use language to enhance personal life
—use language conventions productively, critically, and creatively

These essential understandings, abilities, and propensities are reflected in the performance indicators for four broad language outcomes.

—**Students will read, write, listen, and speak for aesthetic response and expression.** As listeners and readers, students will enjoy and appreciate both oral and written texts and performances, relate texts and performances to themselves, and respond sensitively to texts and performances with diverse social, historical, and cultural dimensions. As speakers and writers, they will use oral and written language to express self and to evoke an aesthetic response in others.

—**Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.** As listeners and readers, students will collect data, facts, and ideas; discover relationships, concepts, and generalizations; and use knowledge generated from oral presentations and written texts. As speakers and writers, they will use oral and written language to acquire, interpret, apply, and transmit information.

—**Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.** As listeners and readers, students will use multiple criteria to form opinions and to make judgments about experiences, ideas, information, and issues presented by others. As speakers and writers, they will present, in oral and written language from a variety of perspectives, opinions and judgments on experiences, ideas, information, and issues.

—**Students will write, listen, and speak for social interaction.** Students will use oral and written language to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships.

Mathematics, Science, and Technology

The broad learning Outcomes for Math, Science and Technology follow. The intent of such Outcomes is to improve the mathematical, scientific, and technological literacies of all students; as well as the knowledge and skills at higher levels needed by those who can or should move on to advanced studies and careers in these fields. We note that for both basic science and math literacy needs and more sophisticated levels of study and achievement, the goals embedded in these Outcomes indicate that students should not just know something about, but should become capable of making concrete use of, the essential ways of knowing and doing described and used in mathematics, science, and technology.

—Students will have knowledge, skills and values that empower them to use mathematical analysis, scientific inquiry, and technological concepts, as appropriate, to pose questions, seek answers and design solutions.

—Students will acquire an understanding of the basic concept of systems and their uses in the analysis and interpretation of complex interrelated phenomena in mathematics, technology and science.

—Students will be able to use a full range of information systems including computer technology to access, organize, process, evaluate and communicate information within the context of mathematics, science and technology. This includes networking with different school and community resources (libraries, people, museums, business, industry) to achieve a balanced method of processing information.

—Students will demonstrate knowledge of science's contribution to our understanding of (1) their physical setting, (2) their living environment, and (3) the human organism.

—Students will acquire the knowledge, skills and values relative to the tools, materials and processes of technology to create products, services, systems and environments. This will be done within the context of human endeavors such as agriculture, health, production, shelter, transportation and communication.

—Students will understand and use (a) numerical relationships, (b) symbolic relationships, (c) geometric patterns and relationships, (d) logic and reasoning, (e) probability and statistics, and (f) measurement.

—Students will demonstrate the ability to identify the interconnectedness of mathematics, technology, and science and to transfer systems of knowledge, internally and externally to other areas of learning and performance.

—Students will be motivated to strive for knowledge and understanding on a continuing basis throughout their lives, to enrich and enhance themselves, and to improve their capabilities to use mathematics, science and technology in making informed choices about daily living and societal issues.

—Students will leave high school with proficiencies in mathematics, science and technology that will enable them to:

A. Work cooperatively with others
B. Achieve success in a post-secondary school setting
C. Enter the work place ready to adapt successfully to different jobs.
D. Enter the workplace ready with the skills necessary for continuing advancement in a high performance job.

Social Studies

The broad learning Outcomes for Social Studies follow. While the first nine of these 18 Outcomes are content-centered, the last nine focus more on skills and capacities for application, along with communication, participation, and attitudes. We note that these Outcomes reflect a view of social studies which includes the social sciences generally, history, as well as elements of the humanities and cultural studies. The Outcomes also reflect awareness of the interpretive and perspectival forms of knowledge, the multi-cultural social context, and the global, technological, and ethical significance of the themes and resources addressed in social studies. We note that development of tolerance, engagement and participation, and empathetic understanding of differing points of view, including those represented in social research, are all expected of students, for whom social studies are to be a resource and point of departure for responsible engagement in the social world.

Students will employ methods of inquiry from history and the social sciences to:

—Understand that the people of the United States are united by shared values, practices, and traditions drawn from diverse sources and modified by the American experience.

—Understand that the population of the United States is composed of diverse groups, for example, cultural, ethnic, racial, socio-economic and gender groups, and that differences frequently result in varied perspectives.

—Analyze and evaluate historic, social, economic and political events of the U.S. and the world from diverse perspectives.

—Compare political, economic, and cultural systems throughout the world - over time and in their geographic settings.

—Analyze human, technological, and natural factors which have supported stability and change, and evaluate their effects on individuals, groups, and societies.

—Evaluate in light of up-to-date scholarship differing, competing, and changing interpretations of events, eras, ideas, and the roles played by individuals and groups.

—Understand global interdependence and assume personal and collective responsibility for humankind and the global environment.

—Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the development of democratic principles and the ideals of human rights in the U.S.

—Understand that democratic principles and the ideals of human rights are evolving concepts in the U.S. and the world, that the U.S. has been an important model in this process, and that the struggle to bridge the gap between these principles and reality is a shared responsibility.

—Participate as informed and responsible citizens in a democratic society.

—Identify, access, organize, analyze, and interpret textual and non-textual data from diverse sources.

—Develop and use decision-making and problem-solving skills.

—Develop and use conflict mediation and resolution skills.

—Communicate information clearly and effectively.

—Respect the rights of others to think, act, and speak differently from themselves.

—Demonstrate socially responsible behavior as family members and participants in school, community, State, and world.

—Develop civic values consistent with the ideals of the U.S. democratic principles.

—Develop a positive sense of one's own worth.

APPENDIX C

Regents Goals for Elementary, Middle, and Secondary School Students

In 1991, The Board of Regents revised the Regents Goals for Elementary, Middle, and Secondary School Students to reflect its vision for students as they prepare to live and work in the 21st Century. These goals are intended to inform and support educational planning locally and at the State level. They are the basis for the development of learning outcomes.

The revised goals have an increased emphasis on understanding and application of information and skills, on the roles of adults and family members in society, and on critical employment skills. The responsibility for achieving the goals remains shared among the State, the local community, the school, the family, and the individual student.

The goals reflect the knowledge, skills, values, and character young people must acquire from their educational experiences to enable them to take advantage of career opportunities; to exercise fully their rights and obligations as citizens of the United States of America and members of the world community; and to meet their responsibilities to self, family, and others.

The goals are the same for all students. However, all students are not the same. Each has different talents, abilities, interests, emotions, and strengths. Schools must recognize and attend to these differences in order to provide an educational experience that enables all students, regardless of circumstance or background, to succeed and achieve excellence.

The Regents Goals represent expectations for students. They are an integrated statement of what students need to know, do, and be like. Taken together, the goals represent the judgment of the Board of Regents as to the essential purposes of a comprehensive elementary, middle, and secondary education.

Goal 1: Each student will master communication and computation skills as a foundation to:

1.1 Think logically and creatively
1.2 Apply reasoning skills to issues and problems
1.3 Comprehend written, spoken, and visual presentations in various media
1.4 Speak, listen to, read, and write clearly and effectively in English
1.5 Perform basic mathematical calculations
1.6 Speak, listen to, read, and write at least one language other than English
1.7 Use current and developing technologies for academic and occupational pursuits
1.8 Determine what information is needed for particular purposes and be able to use libraries and other resources to acquire, organize, and use that information for those purposes

Goal 2: Each student will be able to apply methods of inquiry and knowledge learned through the following disciplines and use the methods and knowledge in interdisciplinary applications:

2.1 English language arts
2.2 Science, mathematics, and technology
2.3 History and social science
2.4 Arts and humanities
2.5 Language and literature in at least one language other than English
2.6 Technological and occupational studies
2.7 Physical education, health and home economics

Goal 3: Each student will acquire knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the artistic, cultural, and intellectual accomplishments of civilization, and develop the skills to express personal artistic talents. Areas include:

3.1 Ways to develop knowledge and appreciation of the arts
3.2 Aesthetic judgments and the ability to apply them to works of art
3.3 Ability to use cultural resources of museums, libraries, theaters, historic sites, and performing arts groups
3.4 Ability to produce or perform works in at least one major art form
3.5 Materials, media, and history of major art forms
3.6 Understanding of the diversity of cultural heritages

Goal 4: Each student will acquire and be able to apply knowledge about political, economic, and social institutions and procedures in this country and other countries. Included are:

4.1 Political, economic, and social processes and policies in the United States at national, State, and local levels
4.2 Political, economic, and social institutions and procedures in various nations; ability to compare the operation of such institutions; and understanding of the international interdependence of political, economic, social, cultural and environmental systems
4.3 Roles and responsibilities the student will assume as an adult, including those of parent, home manager, family member, worker, learner, consumer, and citizen
4.4 Understanding of the institution of the "family," respect for its function, diversity, and variety of form, and the need to balance work and family in a bias-free democratic society

Goal 5: Each student will respect and practice basic civic values and acquire and use the skills, knowledge, understanding, and attitudes necessary to participate in democratic self-government. Included are:

5.1 Understanding and acceptance of the values of justice, honesty, self-discipline, due process, equality, and majority rule with respect for minority rights
5.2 Respect for self, others, and property as integral to a self-governing, democratic society
5.3 Ability to apply reasoning skills and the process of democratic government to resolve societal problems and disputes

Goal 6: Each student will develop the ability to understand, appreciate, and cooperate with people of different race, sex, ability, cultural heritage, national origin, religion, and political, economic, and social background, and to understand and appreciate their values, beliefs, and attitudes.

Goal 7: Each student will acquire the knowledge of the ecological consequences of choices in the use of the environment and natural resources.

Goal 8: Each student will be prepared to enter upon post-secondary education and/or career-level employment at graduation from high school. Included are:

8.1 The interpersonal, organizational, and personal skills needed to work as a group member
8.2 The ability to use the skills of decision-making, problem-solving, and resource management
8.3 An understanding of ethical behavior and the importance of values
8.4 The ability to acquire and use the knowledge and skills to manage and lead satisfying personal lives and contribute to the common good

Goal 9: Each student will develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes which will enhance personal life management, promote positive parenting skills, and will enable functioning effectively in a democratic society. Included are:

9.1 Self-esteem
9.2 Ability to maintain physical, mental, and emotional health
9.3 Understanding of the ill effects of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs and of other practices dangerous to health
9.4 Basic skills for living, decision-making, problem solving, and managing personal resources to attain goals
9.5 Understanding of the multiple roles adults assume, and the rights and responsibilities of those roles
9.6 Basic skills for parenting and child development

Goal 10: Each student will develop a commitment to lifetime learning and constructive use of such learning, with the capacity for undertaking new studies, synthesizing new knowledge and experience with the known, refining the ability to judge, and applying skills needed to take ethical advantage of technological advances.

GRADUATION BY PORTFOLIO AT CENTRAL PARK EAST SECONDARY SCHOOL

As students prepare for graduation at Central Park East Secondary School (CPESS), a high school of 450 students in an East Harlem neighborhood in New York City, they work intensively to prepare portfolios of their work that will reveal their competence and performance in 14 areas. These range from science and technology to ethics and social issues, from school and community service to mathematics, literature, and history The portfolios will be evaluated by a graduation committee composed of teachers from different subjects and grade levels, an outside examiner, and a student peer. The committee members examine the entries and hear the students' oral "defense" of their work as they determine when each student is ready to graduate.

Of the fourteen Portfolios, seven are presented orally before the Graduation Committee, four from the core subjects (asterisked below). The other seven are evaluated independently, although the student may be asked about them during the Graduation Committee hearing. While the final review is based on the individual student's accomplishments, Portfolio requirements can be based on group work.

The fourteen Portfolios include the following:

1. Post Graduate Plan: Each student outlines his or her current purpose for earning a diploma, since "reflecting on purposes helps to set goals." Long and short-range career and life goals, financial concerns, living arrangements, and indicators of progress, such as examinations, interviews, and letters of reference are included in this section.

2. Autobiography: This provides another opportunity for the student to reflect on his or her life and to plan for the future. Material included in this area may examine family history, special events or relationships, values or beliefs in any of a variety of media—written or oral narrative, essay, art, video, drama, music, or other form selected by the student.

3. School/Community Service and Internship: Opportunities for working and serving others are part of student experiences each year starting in 7th grade. Students develop a formal resume of their work experiences along with a project that demonstrates what they have learned from one or more of these experiences. Projects can include essays, videos, work samples, reference letters, and other demonstrations of their accomplishments combined with evidence of what they have learned.

4. Ethics and Social Issues: Students demonstrate their capacity to see multiple perspectives, weigh and use evidence, and reason about social and moral issues in any of a number of ways—by staging a debate, writing an editorial, discussing important issues raised in a novel or film, and/or creating a project that demonstrates these abilities.

5. Fine Arts and Aesthetics: Creative expression and creative appreciation are both evaluated. Students must create a "hands-on" exhibition of performance in any of the arts, and offer evidence of knowledge or understanding in an aesthetic area by studying or critiquing a work, an artist, or a field of artistic expression.

6. Mass Media: Students must show that they understand how different forms of media work and how they affect people and their thinking. This understanding can be demonstrated through many types of projects or activities, ranging from essays to exhibits or media presentations, and must include a relevant bibliography.

7. Practical Skills: In line with CPESS's commitment to preparing students for all aspects of life, they must show evidence of working knowledge in a number of areas, ranging from health and medical care to employment, citizenship, independent living, computers and technology, and legal rights—in a variety of ways, ranging from securing a driver's license to registering to vote to demonstrating the ability to operate a computer.

8. Geography: A teacher-made test and a student-designed performance assessment are used to evaluate geographical knowledge and the ability to use geographical tools such as maps and globes.

9. Second Language and/or Dual Language: All students must demonstrate competence to work in a language other than English as a speaker, listener, reader, and writer. This requirement may be met through the New York State language proficiency exam or a College Board examination. In addition, all students must describe their personal experience with dual language issues and be prepared to discuss a key social or cultural issue associated with language use.

10. Science and Technology:* Students must demonstrate knowledge in traditional ways—a summary of the work they have completed in high school and passage of a teacher-made or state competency test—as well as in performances that demonstrate use of scientific methodology (e.g. conducting and documenting an experiment) and awareness of how science is used in the modern world (e.g. by staging a debate or conducting research on a scientific development analyzing social costs and benefits).

11. Mathematics:* Students must demonstrate basic skills knowledge by passing a state competency test and a teacher-made test. In addition, they must demonstrate higher order thinking abilities by developing a project using mathematics for political, civic or consumer purposes (e.g. social science statistics or polling; architectural blueprints) and either scientific or "pure" mathematics (e.g. using mathematics in a scientific application and/or studying a theoretical problem.)

12. Literature:* Students prepare a list of texts they have read in a wide range of genres to serve as the basis for discussion with the Graduation Committee. They also submit samples of their own essays about literary works or figures, demonstrating their capacity to reflect on and communicate effectively about literary products and ideas.

13. History:* In addition to passing a state competency test or faculty-designed test in history, students must prepare an overview of the areas of history they have studied in secondary school and a time-line of major events and persons. They must also demonstrate understanding of historical work by conducting historical research using primary as well as secondary sources and developing a bibliography. Their work must draw connections between and among past and present events, weigh and use evidence, speculate on other possibilities, and evaluate how history is used or abused in current debates.

14. Physical Challenge: Students demonstrate and/or document their participation and proficiency in any team or individual sport or activity over the past four years. The goal is to encourage the development of life-long health habits and attitudes of independence, interdependence, personal responsibility, and sportsmanship.

A final Senior project is also required in an area of particular interest to the student, which may be one of the portfolio items explored in greater depth.

Portfolio items are evaluated for quality and demonstrated mastery using a grid which reflects major criteria: a **viewpoint** which encompasses wide knowledge and deep understanding; an ability to draw **connections** among information and ideas; appropriate use of **evidence**; an engaging **voice** and awareness of audience; use of proper **conventions**; and an understanding of the **relevance** of the topic/issue to contemporary concerns. When students have completed the portfolio, they have learned to inquire, critique, analyze, present, and defend their ideas. They have also learned to manage long-range tasks that require invention, planning, perseverance, initiative, reflection, and revision. In short, they are ready for the world outside of school.